

# Louis Slobodkin Papers Addendum, 1929-1974

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Creator</b>	Slobodkin, Louis, 1903-1975
<b>Title</b>	Louis Slobodkin Papers Addendum
<b>Dates</b>	1929-1974 (inclusive) 1929 1974
<b>Quantity</b>	10.5 linear feet, (20 containers)
<b>Collection Number</b>	Coll 178
<b>Summary</b>	Louis Slobodkin (1903-1975) was an artist and illustrator and writer of books for children. He won the Caldecott Medal in 1943 for <i>Many Moons</i> . This collection is an addendum to the Slobodkin Papers (call number Ax 733) and contains literary manuscripts and sketchbooks, correspondence with publishers, general correspondence, subject files, art exhibition catalogs, book reviews, and royalty statements.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives.</a> UO Libraries--SPC, 1299 University of Oregon Eugene OR 97403-1299 Telephone: 541-346-3068 Fax: 541-346-3485 <a href="mailto:spcarref@uoregon.edu">spcarref@uoregon.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	Collection is open to the public.  Collection must be used in Special Collections & University Archives Reading Room.
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Sponsor</b>	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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## Historical Note

Louis Slobodkin, sculptor, illustrator, and author, was born in Albany, New York on February 19, 1903, son of Nathan and Dora (nee Lubin) Slobodkin. He attended the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York City from 1918 to 1923. Slobodkin married Florence Gersh on September 27, 1927, and they raised two sons, Lawrence and Michael.

Louis Slobodkin was a noted sculptor. He won twenty-two medals from the Beaux Arts Institute of Design during the period 1918 to 1922, a Louis Tiffany Foundation Fellowship in 1932, Honorable Mention in competition for the Chicago War Memorial, 1932, and various commissions in federal competitions. He frequently served on art juries throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

Slobodkin first achieved fame in 1938 when his "Young Lincoln" statue, which had won a place in the Federal Building at the 1940 World's Fair, was summarily removed and destroyed by an official of the Fair. Slobodkin's many friends in the art world rallied to his cause, and eventually a bronze version

of the plaster original was permanently placed in the Headquarters Building of the Department of the Interior in Washington, D. C.

In 1941, his sketching drew the attention of a friend, Eleanor Estes, who asked him to illustrate her book, *The Moffats* (Harcourt Brace, 1941). The book was well received, and a new career for Slobodkin was launched. In 1943, he illustrated James Thurber's *Many Moons* (Harcourt Brace, 1943), and this book won the Caldecott Medal. Between 1941 and 1972 Slobodkin illustrated, or collaborated on, or wrote and illustrated at least eighty-two titles. Notable among these are the *Moffat* books with Eleanor Estes, *Many Moons* with Thurber, and his own *Magic Michael* (MacMillan, 1944), *Fo'castle Waltz* (Vanguard, 1945), *Sculpture: Principles and Practice* (World, 1949), *The Space Ship Under the Apple Tree* (MacMillan, 1952), *One Is Good but Two Are Better* (Vanguard, 1956), *Yasu and the Strangers* (MacMillan, 1965), and the *Read-About series* (Franklin Watts 1966, 1967). Two of these books are for adult readers-- *Fo'castle Waltz* and *Sculpture: Principles and Practice*--while the rest are for children.

Louis Slobodkin's books have been translated into many foreign languages, including French, Norwegian, German, Italian, and Japanese. They have shown considerable staying power, some remaining in print for over thirty years, and often excerpted for anthologies and curriculum materials.

As Slobodkin's reputation as an author and illustrator grew, he came to be much in demand as a speaker at library association conventions and book fairs. His "chalk talks", given to large audiences of children, were always well received. Slobodkin's gently humorous books generated a steady stream of fan mail, which he carefully answered, addressing the children as equals and encouraging them to place their creativity on a foundation of hard work, as he himself had done.

Louis Slobodkin died in 1975.

## Content Description

This addendum to the Louis Slobodkin Papers consists of manuscripts and sketchbooks, correspondence with publishers, general correspondence, subject files, art exhibition catalogs, book reviews, and royalty statements. The manuscripts, for the most part, are contained in a series of notebooks which also include Slobodkin's sketches. Of special interest is the original copy-edited typesetter's copy of James Thurber's *Many Moons* which Slobodkin illustrated and which won him the Caldecott Medal in 1944. Another manuscript, *Mystery of Twin Moon Mountain*, was never published but offers unique insights about Slobodkin's world view. Miscellaneous artwork, sketches and book reviews done by Slobodkin complete this series

Correspondence is divided into two segments: that with publishers and general, both of which are arranged alphabetically. The correspondence with publishers tells the story of Slobodkin's relationship with major New York publishing firms, one that was often strained by his struggle for improved reproduction of artwork. It also documents the unwillingness of some publishers to stock a backlisted book even if it sold well. Of note in the general correspondence are letters from novelist Anne Parrish and Slobodkin's replies to fan mail from children, which throw an interesting light on his character.

The subject files contain a wide range of materials. Among these files are many clippings and tearsheets useful to the biographer, especially in tracing Louis Slobodkin's earlier career as a noted sculptor.

Of special interest is the file on the famous "Lincoln Statue incident" at the 1940 New York World's Fair. (box 12, folder 2)

Art exhibition catalogs trace Slobodkin's career in sculpture, and place his work in the context of his friends and associates in both the Sculptor's Guild and An American Group, organizations in which he was very active. Although he considered monumental sculpture his specialty, Louis Slobodkin nevertheless created a number of successful "floating" pieces, and some of those are documented here. Slobodkin sculptures can be found in museums throughout the United States and elsewhere, including Israel.

The book reviews are indicative of the generally favorable opinion which reviewers held of Slobodkin's efforts. Typically they found his books slight, not very deep, but humorous and entertaining and occasionally moving, all of which accorded well with his own opinion.

The royalty statements trace the career of each book. Though they were not runaway best sellers, Louis Slobodkin's books had an appreciative audience that bought steadily; some books, such as *Magic Michael*, were in print for over thirty years. Some were translated into French, Spanish, German, Swedish, Norwegian, and especially Japanese, a country where they found a strong readership

A folder of photographic prints and negatives are stored separately under the call number PH156. Most of these are publicity shots relating to book fair appearances, or portraits used on book jackets, bearing no date or other indication of their place in the collection.

## Use of the Collection

### Restrictions on Use

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If a researcher finds sensitive personal information in a collection, please bring it to the attention of the reading room staff.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Louis Slobodkin Papers Addendum, Coll 178, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

## Administrative Information

### Arrangement

Collection is organized into the following series:

Louis Slobodkin Papers Addendum, 1929-1974  
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv41401>

Manuscripts and Sketchbooks  
Correspondence with Publishers  
General Correspondence  
Subject Files  
Art Exhibition Catalogs  
Book Reviews  
Royalty Statements

## Acquisition Information

Gift of Florence Slobodkin in 1983.

## Processing Note

Collection processed by Richard S. Bear.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

## Related Materials

[Louis Slobodkin Papers](#), Ax 733, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

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# Detailed Description of the Collection

## Letter from Florence Slobodkin to University of Oregon Library re materials in this addendum, December 2, 1982

Box1, Folder1

### Series: Manuscripts and Sketchbooks

Note: All manuscripts are contained in notebooks except as noted.

Container(s)	Description
Box	Folder
1	2-3 The Amiable Giant. This version is in the form of a play.
1	4 Bark Said the Cat
1	4 The Pirate Brothers. Two unpublished poems for children
1	5 Bixxy and the Secret Message Mrs. P.

Container(s)		Description
1	5	P. Salamander
1	5	How-When-Where. Notes for various proposed articles
1	6	Circus April 1st
1	6	The Real Chocolate Rabbit
1	6	Eddie and His Grandma
1	7	Colette and the Princess. Trial sketches only
1	7	The Polka-Dot Goat. Trial sketches only
1	8	Donnie and Nonnie. Includes sketches; unpublished
2	1	Marcel the French Seagull. Published as Gogo the French Seagull The Amiable Giant. Play version, incomplete
2	2	Io Sono. Trial sketches. Also includes miscellaneous other sketches
2	3-4	Journal of a Ghost. Unfinished diary of Slobodkin's trip to France in the 1930s
2	5	The Late Cuckoo. Trial sketches only
2	6	Magic Michael. Typescript
2	6	The Wise Maiden. Typescript
2	6	What Happened in the Zoo. Typescript, may have been published as <i>Hustle and Bustle</i>
2	6	Space Ship. Holograph fragment
2	6	Miscellaneous unidentified loose leaf fragments
2	7	Many Moons. By James Thurber. Photocopy of the typescript containing holographic corrections (original in safe 14)
3	1	The Little Mermaid Who Could Not Sing. Holographic fragment with sketches
3	1	Magic Fiddle

Container(s)	Description
3 2	Melvin the Moose Child. Includes sketches
3 2	Thank You - You're Welcome. Sketches only
3 2	Strange Things Have Been Happening to Me. Includes sketches, unpublished
3 3	Mr. Petersand's Cats [and Kittens]
3 3	Our Friendly Friends
3 3	The Adventures of Arab. Incomplete
3 3	Elizabeth. Unpublished
3 4	The Mystery of Twin Moon Mountain. Typescript, unpublished
3 5	Pegasus in Bikini. Includes sketches (Draft of a column for the Fire Island Weekly, ca. 1957)
3 6	One Is Good But Two Are Better
3 6	Hannibal. Includes sketches, unpublished
3 6	Draft of untitled speech on art in children's books
3 7	Read About the Busman. Notes and sketches
3 7	Read About the Fireman. Notes and sketches
3 7	Read About the Garbage Man. Typescript and galley proof, unpublished
4 1	Round Trip Spaceship [?]
4 2	Spaceship in the Park. Rough draft
4 3	Spaceship in the Park. Typescript with corrections
4 4	Spaceship in the Park. Galley proof
4 5	Spaceship Under the Apple Tree. Dramatization, typed
4 6	Miscellaneous "Spaceship" sketches and layouts

Container(s)	Description
4 7	Too Many Mittens. By Florence Slobodkin. Typescript with corrections
5 1	Tommy. Includes sketches, unpublished
5 2	Wilbur the Warrior. Original title: Two Suits of Armour, featuring a king named Horace
5 2	Untitled story of a thermometer
5 3	Wilbur the Warrior. Draft with sketches
5 3	Autobiography of Manny Lipschitz [Louis Slobodkin]. Holograph draft, 2 p.
5 4	Wilbur the Warrior. Sketches only
5 5	Wilbur the Warrior. Loose leaf sketches
5 6	Wilbur the Warrior. Typescript
5 7	Yasu and the Strangers. Draft
5 7	Colette and the Princess. Draft (see also box I, folder 8)
5 7	Moon Blossom and the Golden Penny. Draft
5 7	The Polka-Dot Goat. Draft (see also box I, folder 8)
5 7	Peter the Pelican. Draft, unpublished
5 8	Miscellaneous artwork for: <i>Magic Michael</i> ; <i>Tom Sawyer</i> ; <i>Jonathan and the Rainbow</i> ; <i>The King and the Nobel Blacksmith</i> ; and <i>Peter the Great</i>
5 9	Miscellaneous sketches; letter drafts
5 10	Set designs for an unidentified play
5 11	Book reviews of others' work by Louis Slobodkin
20	Miscellaneous oversize sketches

## Series: Correspondence with publishers

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
6	1	Franklin Watts, Inc.	
6	2	Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc	
6	3	Houghton Mifflin Co.	
6	4	Macmillan Company	1943-1945
6	5	Macmillan Company	1946-1947
6	6	Macmillan Company	1948-1959
6	7	Macmillan Company	1960-1963
6	8	Macmillan Company	1964-1965
6	9	Macmillan Company	1966-1969
6	10	Macmillan Company	1970-1972
7	1	Macmillan Company	1973-1976; undated
7	2	Vanguard	1943-1968
7	3	Vanguard	1969-1974; undated
7	4	World Publishing	

### Series: General correspondence

Container(s)		Description
Box	Folder	
7	5	A
7	6	B

Container(s)		Description
7	7	C
8	1	D
8	2	E
8	3	F
8	4	G
8	5	H
8	6	I-J
8	7	K
8	8	L
8	9	Ma-Mi
9	1	Mo-Mz
9	2	N
9	3	O
9	4	P
9	5	Q-R
9	6	Sa-Sl
9	7	Sm-Su
9	8	T
9	9	U-Z and unidentified

## Series: Subject Files

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
10	1	An American Group	
10	2	Artist's Equity Association	
10	3	Autobiographical fragments	
10	4-5	Book Week Fair	
10	6	Clippings, biographical	
10	7	Clippings, book fairs and chalk talks	
10	8	Conferences and symposiums on children's literature	
10	9	Filmstrip adaptations of children's books	
10	10	Illustrations in periodicals by Slobodkin	
11	1	Kerlan Collection and other collections of children's literature	
11	2	Master Institute of United Arts	
11	3	Memorabilia, personal, including birth certificate and passport	
11	4	"Pegasus in Bikini." Column by Slobodkin for Fire Island Weekly	June 6, 1957 - August 22, 1957
11	5	Periodical articles by, about, or mentioning Slobodkin	
11	6	Record Book (notebook with inventory of story flats and sculptures on hand)	
11	7	Sculptors' Guild	
11	8	Sculpture and Slobodkin	
12	1	<i>The Title Page</i> . Macmillan Juvenile Dept. newsletters	1945-1969

Container(s)	Description	Dates
12 2	World's Fair, 1940 (materials relating to the "Lincoln Statue" incident)	1940

## Series: Art Exhibition Catalogs

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box	Folder	
12 3	Art Exhibition catalogs	1929-1937
12 4	Art Exhibition catalogs	1938
12 5	Art Exhibition catalogs	1939
12 6	Art Exhibition catalogs	1940
12 7	Art Exhibition catalogs	1941
13 1	Art Exhibition catalogs	1942
13 2	Art Exhibition catalogs	1943-1949
13 3	Art Exhibition catalogs	Undated

## Series: Book Reviews

Container(s)	Description
Box	Folder
13 4	<i>The Adventures of Arab</i>
13 4	<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>
13 5	<i>The Beautiful Culpeppers</i>
13 5	<i>Bixxy and the Secret Message</i>
13 6	<i>Circus April 1st</i>

Container(s)	Description
13 6	<i>Clean Clarence</i>
13 7	<i>Colette and the Princess</i>
13 7	<i>Cowboy Twins</i>
13 8	<i>Dinny and Danny</i>
13 8	<i>Evie and Cookie</i>
13 8	<i>Evie and the Wonderful Kangaroo</i>
13 9	<i>Excuse Me - Certainly</i>
13 9	<i>The First Book of Drawing</i>
13 10	<i>Fo'castle Waltz</i>
13 10	<i>The Friendly Animals</i>
13 11	<i>Gogo the French Seagull</i>
13 11	<i>A Good Place to Hide</i>
13 12	<i>The Horse with the High-Heeled Shoes</i>
13 12	<i>The Hundred Dresses</i>
13 13	<i>Hustle and Bustle</i>
13 13	<i>Io Sono</i>
13 14	<i>Jonathan and the Rainbow</i>
14 1	<i>The King and the Noble Blacksmith</i>
14 1	<i>The Late Cuckoo</i>
14 1	<i>Little O</i>
14 2	<i>Love and Knishes</i>

Container(s)	Description
14 2	<i>Luigi and the Long-Nosed Soldier</i>
14 3	<i>The Magic Fishbone</i>
14 3	<i>Magic Michael</i>
14 4	<i>Many Moons</i>
14 4	<i>The Marshmallow Ghosts</i>
14 4	<i>Martin's Dinosaur</i>
14 5	<i>The Middle Moffat</i>
14 5	<i>Millions and Millions</i>
14 6	<i>Mister Mushroom</i>
14 6	<i>Mr. Petersand's Cats (and Kittens)</i>
14 7	<i>Mr. Spindles and the Spiders</i>
14 7	<i>The Moffats</i>
14 8	<i>Moon Blossom and the Golden Penny</i>
14 8	<i>Nomi and the Lovely Animals</i>
14 9	<i>One Is Good but Two Are Better</i>
14 9	<i>Our Friendly Friends</i>
14 10	<i>The Polka-Dot Goat</i>
14 10	<i>Read About the Busman</i>
14 10	<i>Read About the Fireman</i>
14 10	<i>Read About the Policeman</i>
14 10	<i>Read About the Postman</i>

Container(s)		Description
14	10	<i>Round Trip Space Ship</i>
14	10	<i>Rufus M</i>
14	11	<i>Saucepan Journey</i>
14	11	<i>Sculpture Principles and Practices</i>
14	11	<i>The Seaweed Hat</i>
14	12	<i>The Shoes Fit for a King</i>
14	12	<i>The Space Ship in the Park</i>
14	12	<i>The Space Ship Returns to the Apple Tree</i>
14	12	<i>The Space Ship Under the Apple Tree</i>
14	13	<i>Thank you - You're Welcome</i>
14	13	<i>The Three-Seated Space Ship</i>
14	13	<i>Too Many Mittens</i>
14	14	<i>Up High and Down Low</i>
14	14	<i>Upside-Down Town</i>
14	15	<i>The Warm-Hearted Polar Bear</i>
14	15	<i>The Wide-Awake Owl</i>
15	1	<i>Wilbur the Warrior</i>
15	1	<i>Yasu and the Strangers</i>
15	2	<i>Miscellaneous other titles and publicity</i>

## Series: Royalty Statements

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Box	Folder		
15	3	E. P. Dutton	1965-1975
15	4	Franklin Watts Inc.	1958-1965
15	5	Franklin Watts Inc.	1966-1967
15	6	Franklin Watts Inc.	1968-1970
15	7	Franklin Watts Inc.	1971-1973
15	8	Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.	1943-1959
15	9	Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.	1960-1973
15	10	Houghton Mifflin Company	1949-1977
16	1	Little, Brown	
16	2	Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co, Inc.	
16	3	Macmillan Company	1945-1959
16	4	Macmillan Company	1960-1962
16	5	Macmillan Company	1963-January 1966
16	6	Macmillan Company	April 1966-1967
16	7	Macmillan Company	1968
16	8	Macmillan Company	1969
17	1	Macmillan Company	1970
17	2	Macmillan Company	1971
17	3	Macmillan Company	1972
17	4	Macmillan Company	1973

Container(s)	Description	Dates
17 5	Macmillan Company	1974
17 6	Macmillan Company	1975
17 7	Thomas Y. Crowell Co.	1959-1973
18 1	Vanguard Press, Inc.	1946-1958
18 2	Vanguard Press, Inc.	1959-1961
18 3	Vanguard Press, Inc.	1962-1964
18 4	Vanguard Press, Inc.	1965-1966
18 5	Vanguard Press, Inc.	1967-1968
18 6	Vanguard Press, Inc.	1969-1970
18 7	Vanguard Press, Inc.	1971-1972
18 8	Vanguard Press, Inc.	1973-1974
18 9	World Publishing Company	1945-1969
19	Loose leaf scrap book covering sculpture and writing careers	

## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Authors, American--20th century--Correspondence  
 Children and Youth  
 Children's literature, American--Authorship  
 Children's literature, American--Illustrations  
 Fine Arts  
 Illustrators--United States  
 Literature  
 Sculptors--United States

### Personal Names :

Thurber, James, 1894-1961

### Form or Genre Terms :

Exhibition catalogs

Finding aid prepared by Richard S. Bear. Revisions by Austin Munsell and Rachel Lilley.  
2007